

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 TEGUCI 03945 172114Z  
ACTION ARA-14

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FM AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA  
TO USINFO WASHDC PRIORITY  
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UNCLAS TEGUCIGALPA 3945

FOR: PGM/RC AND VOA/PL; PGM/PP

E.O. 11652: N/A  
SUBJ: MEDIA REACTION

1. TEGUCIGALPA-THE AUGUST 17 MORNINGS GIVE PAGE ONE COVERAGE TO AMBASSADOR JARAMILLO'S FIRST CALL ON THE MILITARY JUNTA THE PREVIOUS AFTERNOON. LA PRENSA CARRIES A SMILING PICTURE OF THE AMBASSADOR WITH THE ONE-COLUMN CAPTION, "CORDIAL RELATIONS WITH THE U.S. CONTINUE", AND A BRIEF PAGE THREE. LA TRIBUNA'S PAGE ONE REEFER BOX PROCLAIMS: "AMBASSADOR JARAMILLO ASSURES: U.S. DID NOT INTERVENE IN CHANGE OF MELGAR CASTRO". BACK PAGE STORY QUOTES THE AMBASSADOR IN RESPONSE TO A REPORTER'S INFERENCE THAT THE EMBASSY HAD STOPPED A PREVIOUS ATTEMPTED COUP AS FOLLOWS: "THAT'S FOOLISHNESS-THE UNITED STATES HAS NOT PARTICIPATED IN ANY WAY IN THE CHANGE OF GOVERNMENT".

2. THE LA TRIBUNA STORY CONTINUES, QUOTING THE AMBASSADOR ON THE QUESTION OF ELECTIONS IN HONDURAS ON WHICH SHE EXPRESSED: "MY COUNTRY IS VERY INTERESTED IN SEEING EVERY NATION RETURN TO CONSTITUTIONAL GOVERNMENT AND IS FOLLOWING THE PROCESS (HERE) VERY CLOSELY". THE INTERVIEW WITH THE AMBASSADOR ON HER DEPARTURE FROM THE PRESIDENTIAL PALACE WAS AIRED ON ALL MAJOR RADIO STATIONS DURING THE AUGUST 17 MORNING NEWS.

3. IN HIS "SYNTHESIS" COLUMN IN LA PRENSA OF AUGUST 16, INFLUEN-  
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TIAL COLOUMNIST AMILCAR SANTAMARIA, GIVES HIS READING ON THE STATE OF DEMOCRACY IN HONDURAS. "WITH REFERENCE TO THE DEFENESTRATION OF THE EX-CHIEF OF STATE, DON JUAN ALBERTO MELGAR", SANTAMARIA BEGINS, "SOME COMMENTATORS HAVE EXPRESSED WITH A MIXTURE OF SURPRISE AND ANGUISH-THAT EVERY DAY THERE IS MORE POPULAR INDIFFERENCE TO THE DRAMAS, BOTH GREAT AND SMALL, OF THE SUB-WORLD OF POWER".

4. SANTAMARIA THEN RECOUNTS THE OVERTHROW OF THE LAST ELECTED PRESIDENT, RAMON ERNESTO CRUZ, THE INSTALLATION OF LOPEZ ARELLANO WHO IN TURN WAS REPLACED BY MELGAR, WHO HIMSELF WAS INVITED TO STEP DOWN, ALL WITHOUT ANY POPULAR REACTION, "AS IF HONDURANS COULDN'T CARE LESS WHAT WAS HAPPENING".

5. "WHAT IS BEHIND THIS COOLNESS, THIS COLLECTIVE FRIGID INDIFFERENCE?" SANTAMARIA ASKS, AND THEN SETS FORTH THE FOLLOWING ANSWER. ONE THEORY WITH A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF VALIDITY, HE SAYS, IS THAT "HONDURAS HAS NEVER BEEN, CONTRARY TO WHAT THEY HAVE BEEN REPEATING TO US IN SCHOOL, A DEMOCRATIC NATION."

6. "IF WE STRIKE AN HISTORIC BALANCE, FROM SEPTEMBER 1821 TO THE PRESENT, WE CAN COUNT ON OUR FINGERS THE LEGITIMATE GOVERNMENTS WHICH PEACEFULLY CONCLUDED THEIR MANDATES, THE NATION HAS LIVED BRIEF OASIS OF LEGITIMACY-AMIDST THE LONG AND DARK NIGHT IN WHICH THE SINISTER CLASH OF THE SWORD HAS PREVAILED."

7. SANTAMARIA CONCLUDES: "IT ISN'T STRANGE THAT WE ARE GOVERNED BY THE SABLE. IT WOULD BE UNUSUAL IF IT WERE OTHERWISE, THAT WE WOULD BE RULED BY LAWS, BY A CIVILIZED CONSENSUS AND BY THE ORGANIZED WILL OF THE LEGITIMATE SOVEREIGN POWER, THE PEOPLE".

8. LOOKING TO THE FUTURE, THE LA PRENSA COLUMNIST ADDS: "WHAT UNCLASSIFIED

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IS THEN THE INEVITABLE INFERENCE THAT MUST BE DEDUCED FROM THE PROOF OF THIS SAD REALITY? FUNDAMENTALLY ONE: THERE MUST BE A MASSIVE AND PERMANENT EDUCATION FOR DEMOCRACY, IN ORDER THAT, IN THE FUTURE, THE NEGLIGENCE, THE INDIFFERENCE, THE SILENCE AND THE COWARDNESS WILL DISAPPEAR. TO DEMOCRATIZE IS, BASICALLY, TO GUARANTEE PARTICIPATION. AT THE PRESENT THERE IS LITTLE OF THAT IN HONDURAS. BUT WE MUST CHANGE, OR SUFFER THE CONSEQUENCES OF TWO MORE CENTURIES OF THE BLACK NIGHT OF THE SWORD."  
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## Message Attributes

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